

UPDATE: Flood waters starts receding but lakhs still stranded , cut off in the Kashmir Valley

Lakhs of people are still stranded in flood-affected Jammu and Kashmir even as the armed forces and teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) stepped up relief and rescue operations after the weather further improved on Tuesday. The rescue teams have evacuated about 43,000 people, including 24,000 from Srinagar city. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah described the floods as the worst in 109 years and said the government would reach out to all the victims. Thousands of people are still trapped in their homes in Srinagar with little or no food , water and medicines. The only State presence on the ground is that of the Armed forces and a handful of police. While the boats kept bringing hordes of stranded people, thousands are still trapped and the dearth of boats and lack of an organized response to the calamity has only fuelled anger among the residents.

There is a major breakdown in all forms of communication- not only between the people, but also between the district administration and the government. This has stalled a coordinated response to the floods. Authorities were also trying to fix the telecommunication links snapped since Sunday afternoon on a war footing and hope to restore it in a phased manner. Officials said shortage of boats was also affecting rescue operations. A total of 61 Indian Air Force choppers and transport air craft undertook 354 sorties non-stop overnight to carry men and relief materials to submerged parts of the Valley where about one lakh troops are engaged in rescue operations equipped with 170 boats. Over 40 boats were airlifted from Rajasthan and Punjab states with 10 medical teams.

Both inside the flooded city and the rare dry islands, there were scenes of helplessness on Tuesday. From Natipora to Nowgam, a stretch of 5 km where more than 2,500 houses have been submerged, people rowed along in makeshift rafts amid cries of help for drinking water, food and even insulin. The Army is using social media applications such as twitter, facebook and WhatsApp to reach out to the flood affected people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Flood waters started receding in Kashmir on Tuesday but hundreds of thousands were still awaiting to be rescued, many stuck on rooftops for days with little or no food and clean water. A massive multi-agency rescue and relief operation gathered pace as the rain eased with air force and civilian helicopters and transport aircraft conducting non-stop sorties and rescuing over a thousand people and dropping relief materials in submerged South Kashmir and Srinagar.

Media reports said over 47,000 people had been evacuated so far but close to 4,00,000 were still stranded, in their homes or in makeshift tents and ill-prepared rescue camps. The worst flood have left at least 200 people dead in the past week and around 2,000 villages under several feet of muddy water. The disaster has brought devastation to the other side of the border too with over 230 dead and nearly half a million affected in Pakistan's Punjab and in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The Army is running 12 relief camps in the state and setting up a field hospital, apart from transporting 150 tonnes of rations, one lakh ready to eat meals, two tones of medicines, etc

Medical supplies and solar lamps are being sent to the affected areas, rescue and relief operations are on in full swing, with the Army, the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) having been engaged in the work on a war-footing. Even as water of Jhelum river has flooded parts of Srinagar and adjacent areas, the NDRF, the IAF and Army engineering teams are putting in huge efforts towards rescue and relief operations

(The Hindu, Hindustan Times & Times of India, 10th September 2014)

ACTIONS TO DATE, AND EMERGENCY NEEDS

After assessing the flood situation in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday declared the situation a "national-level disaster" and announced a special assistance of INR 1,000 crore (US\$ 170, 940, 171) for the flood-hit state besides INR 2 00000 (US \$ 3419) compensation from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for the kin of the dead and INR 50,000 (US \$ 855) for those seriously injured.

CASA has released INR 21, 75, 500 (US\$37,188) towards organizing distribution of dry ration kit and NFIs to 1170 families in Kulgam and Sri Nagar districts in Kashmir. CASA along with its local partner organizations and Mountain Forum Himalayas have been one of the first respondents to the disaster in Kashmir. Immediate procurement of food, blankets, tarpaulin, hygiene kits, utensils, torch, etc for the affected families is underway. Along with its local partner Jammu Kashmir Humanitarian Foundation, CASA is identifying suitable relief sites for starting community kitchens. These community kitchens will be started where large number of people is taking emergency shelter. CASA is also collaborating with CNI Diocese of Amritsar for establishing a warehouse in Srinagar.

CASA's and its partner organization's staff are already there in Kashmir but are not able to reach the affected areas as the villages remain cut off and even the area where these staff are staying is also marooned. They are also facing difficulty in meeting their food and other needs. Communication network was completely damaged by the flood and we are having difficulties even in communicating with them. Once the water recedes, our staff along with local partner staff will visit the most affected villages and start the relief work.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD:





Update-II: FLOOD SITUATION REMAINS GRIM IN KASHMIR VALLEY

More than 220 people are feared killed and 20,000 houses damaged as incessant rain, flash flood and landslides wreaked havoc in Jammu and Kashmir state over the past few days. The number is likely to rise as authorities are yet to receive information from remote areas of the region. The death toll includes 67 victims of Nowshera bus accident and 30 victims of Pancheri landslide. Bodies of several of them are yet to be recovered. According to reports, 2,500 livestock perished in the flood, while over 170 government buildings suffered heavy damages during the calamity.

More than 1,10,000 people have been rescued in massive rescue-cum-relief operations launched jointly by the armed forces and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) along with police from different parts of flood ravaged Jammu and Kashmir. At least 84 Indian Air Force (IAF) and Army Aviation Corps aircraft and helicopters are in action ferrying marooned people to safer places.

But there's a downside as well. Burglars are having a field day in the flood-hit Valley, particularly in Srinagar city, where frightened residents left their houses unlocked. Briefing reporters on rescue operations, an Army spokesman said, "The Army has deployed around 30,000 troops for rescue and relief out of which 21,000 are in Srinagar region alone and 9,000 in Jammu.

So far 2,24,000 litres of water, 2.6 tons of biscuit, 7.5 tons baby food and 31,500 food packets have been airdropped or distributed. We have also provided 8,200 blankets and 650 tents to flood victims. More relief materials, including water bottles and food packets are being airlifted from Hyderabad, Baroda, Golden Temple (Amritsar), Ambala and Delhi.

The IAF has scaled back its chopper winching operations since the focus now is on airdropping food, water and other relief material to thousands of people marooned on rooftops in flood-hit Srinagar. Moreover, ground operations have also become robust with the Army and NDRF deploying 372 boats to rescue victims. Naval marine commandos are also trying to build "boat bridges" or "water-ways" between low-lying areas and higher ground across the Jhelum. Officials, however, did admit there was "some concern" about the "safety" of choppers after a few incidents of stone-pelting but maintained that the overriding factor in scaling down winching operations was the logistics involved. It takes a sortie of around 90 minutes to winch up 25 persons. In the same time, around 5,000 food and relief packets can be airdropped to people, some of whom do not want to leave their homes. But we are also continuing with winching operations as and when required," said an official.

The damage to Srinagar because of flooding could have been less severe if state authorities had opened up crucial embankments in uninhabited areas in southern Kashmir, a reconstruction of events and accounts from rescuers seem to suggest. Battling its worst flooding in 60 years, Jammu and Kashmir is the only state in the country that doesn't have monitoring centres to warn about the changes in the levels of rivers and lakes that dot the flood-prone border state.

A proposal by the Central Water Commission (CWC) – a Union government body responsible for keeping a watch on rivers and reservoirs – to set up flood-monitoring stations has been pending for more than five years.

The survey of the affected villages and buildings was in progress, and it is feared that nearly 1,600 villages across region were directly or indirectly affected by the flood. To restore connectivity, five BRO task forces are on the job and have restored the links between Batote-Kishtwar and Kishtwar-Sinthan Pass-Anantnag which are now open for light vehicles, while the Jammu-Poonch road has been cleared as well. Flagship fuel retailer Indian Oil Corporation has airlifted tanker-loads of jet fuel and diesel to Srinagar to keep the relief and rescue sorties by Army aircraft going in the flood-ravaged Kashmir Valley. Road link to all district headquarters and tehsils has been restored and the internal road links are likely to functional within a week.

(Hindustan Times, The Indian Express & Times of India, 12th September 2014)

ACTIONS TO DATE, AND EMERGENCY NEEDS

The State and Central Government apart from announcing compensations are continuing with the rescue and relief efforts. The following are the updates as on 11th September 2014:

1,10,000 people rescued so far by the armed forces and NDRF. 84 transport aircraft and helicopters of IAF and Army Aviation Corps pressed into service. 2, 24,000 liters of water, 31,500 food packets and over 375 tonne cooked food have been airdropped. 8,200 blankets and 650 tents provided to the flood survivors. 80 medical teams of the Armed Forces Medical Services are operating in the state. Four field hospitals have been established and 21,500 patients have already been treated. 90 more boats have been deployed by Army in Srinagar and adjoining areas. A total of 224 boats of Army and 148 NDRF's inflatable boats are involved in the rescue operation. 19 relief camps have been setup by the armed forces in Srinagar and Jammu region. 10,000 personnel of Army Engineers and Border Roads Organisation restored road links to over 1,000 villages and towns in J&K. Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, shut due to landslide near Ramsoo, was opened for light motor vehicles.

CASA has sent out two of its senior and experienced staff to Sri Nagar on 7th September 2014 and they have been assessing the situation and coordinating with the Government and local agencies to effect a response to the situation. CASA has identified two local partners namely NGOs Federation headed by Mr.Imtias Hussain and Rev. Vinesh Sunny from Church of North India. This has also added 37 more people to the CASA's ground team. A warehouse has already been identified by our team, which is Kashmir Valley School located adjacent to the Srinagar Airport. CASA HQ team is airlifting 1500 units of solar lantern with the help from Indigo Air lines, a commercial airline company in India today. Tomorrow, CASA will air lift 12,000 liters of A+ full cream milk in tetra packs to Sri nagar . CASA team in Srinagar is carrying out an assessment by boat in the Mallora, Shanting, Kawasas, and Narabal areas to facilitate the distribution of solar lanterns and milk. CASA is also in the process of procuring dry rations, utensil sets, woolen blanket, tarpaulins sheets, ground sheets, plastic bucket with lid, plastic mug, water purification tablet, hygiene kit, etc. Arrangements are made to start the relief distribution even by boats.

Update III: Rain lashes the Kashmir Valley, rescue operation affected

Jammu and Kashmir is battling one of the worst floods in decades with rivers in the region in spate due to days of incessant rain. The Army, IAF and NDRF are doing a massive round-the-clock rescue and relief operation, with 86 aircrafts and 30,000 troops. Armed forces and National Disaster Relief Force have rescued over two lakh trapped people as the operations entered the 13th day. Over one lakh people are still marooned after the worst floods in the state in a century unleashed a trail of death and destruction, claiming at least 250 lives. While it will take some time to know the real loss the floods have caused in Jammu and Kashmir, an initial estimate has put it around Rs.5,700 crore, with heavy damages to trade, hotels, restaurants, horticulture and handicraft. The total losses are estimated to be Rs.2,630 crore for hotels, trade, agriculture and horticulture, roads and bridges, while infrastructure like railways, power and communication would have suffered a loss of around Rs.2,700-3,000 crore," Assocham has said in a statement.

Anxiety grew on Sunday with fresh rains lashing the Valley, the Jhelum rising, and the weatherman predicting more downpours with thunder and lightning for the next five to seven days across the state- a situation unfavorable for effective rescue work. While the rain on Sunday was intermittent, it compounded problems of the flood-hit people in relief camps at various places in south Srinagar. Localities like Bemina, Batamaloo and Karan Nagar continued to remain under 10 to 15 feet of water; the locals said on phone which worked with great difficulty. Even though the authorities announced 80% of BSNL mobile and landline services across Kashmir were restored, the service was extremely poor. Srinagar's two main hospitals, SMHS and GB pant, are still under 15 feet of water.

With the threat of disease outbreak lurking in flood-ravaged Jammu and Kashmir, efforts have been initiated on a war-footing to provide medical staff and medicines. Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, who visited the flood-hit J&K on Sunday, said the valley now faces challenge of coping with waterborne diseases. Promising to assist the state government in arresting the spread of diseases such as diarrhea, jaundice and gastroenteritis, he said efforts are on to launch an education campaign and hyper-chlorination. He said the Centre has dispatched about 50 lakh chlorine tablets.

Armed Forces have also established 19 relief camps in Srinagar and Jammu region. "In Srinagar region, camps were established at BB Cantt, Avantipur, Old Airfield, Sumbal, Chattargam and Jijamata Mandir, where thousands of rescued people are being sheltered," the spokesperson said. To restore road connectivity, five task forces of Border Roads Organisation, which include 5700 personnel, have been deployed in Srinagar, Rajouri and Akhnoor, he said. According to unofficial estimates, the death roll was around 250. The Army officer said that suction pumps and other engineering equipment from Vishakhapatnam have reached the flood affected areas for relief work. 12 sewage pumps from Delhi have also been dispatched to the Valley.

Also, 30 generator sets of 3 to 5 KVA capacity have been sent to Srinagar to provide continuous power supply in relief camps and field hospitals, the officer said. Thirteen tonnes of water purifying tablets and six water filtration plants with a capacity to filter 1.2 lakh bottles per day have also reached Srinagar.

While the flood waters are receding from several parts of Srinagar, hundreds of houses in localities like Jawahar Nagar, Googji Bagh, Bemina, Ram Bagh and Nowgam have collapsed, with an NDRF official

telling that there might be hundreds of casualties. The state continues to be in dire need of electricity and telephone lines or mobile connections to synchronize relief operations and help re-establish contact between countless families living in ignorance of what fate befell their close relatives and friends in the valley. Officials said evacuation of residents held-up in their houses in submerged areas will take two to three days. In some low lying areas it may take even longer.

On the other side, more than 10 breaches in the embankment of the Jhelum river within a span of 10 hours have caused devastation in Srinagar, yet even after six days the government has failed to plug these breaches, causing water stagnation within the city. These breaches have left the city's business centre, Lal Chowk, and the localities of Rajbagh, Jawhar Nagar, Tulsi Bagh, Indira Nagar and Shivpora completely submerged. Though the water in the river has started to recede, it continues to flow into residential areas, submerging some houses under nearly 15 feet of water.

The government's indifference towards disaster management and years of neglect were the main reasons for the havoc wrecked by floods in the Kashmir Valley that have claimed more than 250 lives, experts say. The Himalayan region is vulnerable to natural disasters ranging from earthquakes and floods to cloud bursts, but the government does not have a disaster management plan in place. These were not flash floods but build up due to non-stop rains for five consecutive days, said former bureaucrat Mohammad Saleem Beg, who submitted the INR 2,200 crore proposal on flood management to the Centre in 2010.

A 2012 Comptroller and Auditor General report said the State's disaster management preparedness remained tardy despite the loss of 86,000 lives in an earthquake in 2005, the highest for any region since 2001. The government did not set up a quick disaster response and relief team despite requests by the National Disaster Management Authority and did not use available satellite technology to evacuate people.

(India Today, in, Hindustan Times, The Indian Express & Times of India, 13 & 15th September 2014)

ACTIONS TO DATE, AND EMERGENCY NEEDS

The State and Central Government apart from announcing compensations are continuing with the rescue and relief efforts. The following are the updates as on 11th September 2014:

Over 1,84,000 persons have been rescued so far by Armed Forces and NDRF from different parts of the flood-hit state. 13 tonnes of water purifying tablets and six water filtration plants with a capacity to filter 1.2 lakh bottles per day has reached Srinagar. 30 generator sets of 3 to 5 KVA capacity have also been sent to Srinagar for continuous power supply in relief camps and field hospitals. Additional equipment from BSNL are being dispatched to restore communication systems in the state. 8,200 blankets and 1,392 tents have been provided to the flood victims. 80 medical teams of Armed Forces Medical Services are operating in full swing. 4 field hospitals have been established in Avantipur, Pattan, Anantnag and Old Airfield. Till now, they have treated around 51,476 patients. 84 aircrafts and helicopters of Indian Air Force and Army Aviation Corps are carrying out rescue and relief. Army has deployed around 30,000 troops for the relief work. More than 5,08,000 litres of water, 3,10,000 food packets and over 1,054 tonnes of cooked food have already been airdropped. So far, 2,253 sorties were undertaken by the helicopters and aircrafts and 3,017 tonnes of relief materials have been dropped. A total of 224 boats of Army and 148 NDRF's inflatable boats are actively involved in the rescue operation. Armed Forces have

also established 19 relief camps in Srinagar and Jammu region. In Srinagar, camps were established at BB Cantt, Avantipur, Old Airfield, Sumbal, Chattargam and Jijamata Mandir.

CASA HQ team has airlifted 1500 units of solar lantern and 6888 litres A+ full cream milk in tetra packs to Srinagar with the help from Indigo Air lines, a commercial airline company in India last week. Milk and Glucose biscuit packets will also be airlifted soon. The following table provides the date wise details of the immediate relief items has been/ will be airlifted by CASA.

Dispatch Date	Item	Quantity	No. of pieces/units
13/09/2014	Solar Lantern	250 cartons	1500 units
14/09/2014	Nestle Milk	574 Cartons	6888 Litres
15/09/2014	Nestle Milk	425 Cartons	5100 liters
16/09/2014	Biscuits	298 Cartons	42912 packets

CASA has placed orders for the following relief materials and will transport and distribute them to the flood affected families in Kashmir valley road links are restored.

DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
Blanket	4000 pcs.
Plastic Mug Virgin Plastic 1 liter.	1000 pcs.
15 ltr. 825 gms. UNHCR type Plastic Bucket	1000 pcs.
TTK Prestige-Popular 5 liter Pressure Cooker	1000 pcs.
Aquatabs .67 mg for 14 ltr water storage container	5000 ((Strip of 10 tablets)
Utensil Sets	1000 set
Hygiene Kit	1000 kit
Ground Sheet 12x9 (150 GSM)	1000 pcs.
Silpaulin Tarpaulin 12x18 (150 GSM)	1000 pcs.

CASA field team has already started the relief distribution in Srinagar from 13th September 2014. The electricity, data and wireless services are yet to be restored fully. Therefore, we will share photos once these services are restored in the region.

Update IV: Railway resumes partial service in the Valley, slow pace of relief work raises concern

As water levels recede, the J&K government has failed to take up the task of draining out stagnant water due to lack of dewatering pumps. Pumps in the city are submerged and airlifting new ones from outside the state will take time. 2,34,000 people have been rescued so far by the Armed Forces and the NDRF from different parts of Jammu & Kashmir. Three teams of Naval Marine Commandos are actively involved in rescue operations at Watlab, Widiyura and Tankpur. Government fears that after the water recedes there might be outbreak of water borne diseases. "As the flood water has started receding the apprehension for water borne diseases is rising. Now demand for filtered water has increased," said a senior officer of the Defence Ministry. Centre has already lifted twenty RO plants with a capacity to filter 4,00,000 litre per day from Hyderabad and four RO plants from Delhi with a capacity to filter 1,00,000 litre per day. Besides, thirteen tones of water purifying tablets and six water filtration plants with a capacity to filter 1,20,000 bottles per day was sent earlier to Srinagar.

"Further to pump out water in the submerged areas more heavy duty suction pumps are being airlifted from Jodhpur and Raipur. Sewage pumps from Delhi have also been dispatched to the valley. Thirty generator sets of 3 to 5 KVA capacity have also been sent to Srinagar to augment continuous power supply in relief camps and field hospitals," said a senior officer of the Defence Ministry.

33,000 blankets have been airlifted to flood-affected area. 5 task forces of Border Roads Organisation, which include 5,700 personnel, have been deployed in Srinagar, Rajouri and Akhnour. They have restored the road connectivity from Batote to Bijbiara and Srinagar to Sonamarg. Srinagar-Baramulla road has been opened for light motor vehicles.

Expressing its concern over the slow pace of relief, the Supreme Court observed that top priority for the State government was to bring drinking water and medicines to the flood victims. The court also wanted the State government to make ex-gratia payments to victims for immediate life support. Rain had washed away forward border posts. "This is the time of maximum infiltration. Forces have to be diverted there and these are sensitive parts." The Bench pointed out that petitioners' have contended that people were rescued and dumped without basic life support. There were only a few health camps and banks have also stopped functioning.

Though large parts of the Kashmir Valley are still inundated, the Railways have been able to partially restore services there. Northern Railway officials said the Railways was able to commence DEMU services in the Kashmir Valley and also services of two trains between Srinagar and Baramulla on Monday. While special trains have been pressed into service, additional coaches have also been attached to the regular trains. The officials claimed they have cleared around 28,000 flood-affected persons stuck in Katra, Udhampur and Jammu. "Flood-affected passengers arriving at Delhi, New Delhi and Anand Vihar railway stations from Jammu and Kashmir are being cleared by special and regular trains. Arrangements like special waiting room at the New Delhi station has been set up. Help desks have also been created for entertaining enquiries," an official added.

Sheikh Mubarakh shuddered as he recalled the devastation caused by the floods in Jammu and Kashmir. "After the flood waters entered our area, all we could do was run leaving whatever little we could take along. Dead bodies of familiar faces were floating around but no one cared," said Mubarakh, who had

moved to the Valley in 2010 along with his brother. Mubarakh was among the over 1,500 flood-hit people from J&K who reached east Delhi's Anand Vihar terminal in a special train on Monday.

"We walked over 300 kilometers to reach army camps that were already stuffed with people. After a lot of struggle, we managed to reach the railway station. I am relieved that at last I will be able to meet my family," said Mohammad Iqbal, from Bihar. Many like Iqbal were put into various trains to their respective hometowns from Delhi on Monday. Most victims belonged to Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Shabnam, an agricultural labourer, held her four-year-old daughter, Meher, near her chest. The tiresome walks and lack of food had rendered Meher weak with high fever. "We were given some food at the Udhampur station but after the train started we have been starving. The doctors here gave her some tablets and has asked her to take ample rest," said a teary-eyed Shabnam.

"People are coming to us with body ache and flu. Disaster affected victims are overworked and in a state of shock. It takes a while for it to completely heal. We have given them medicines for temporary relief," said Dr. Sujata from the Railway Hospital.

Highway closure cuts off supplies of essentials: With floods rendering the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway inoperational for 12 consecutive days today, Valley residents are facing an acute shortage of essential commodities even as people in some areas of north and south Kashmir accused the administration of concentrating only on Srinagar city.

The 300-km long Jammu-Srinagar National Highway is considered the lifeline of Kashmir and is used to bring in essential commodities to the Valley but the closure has cut off transportation of goods. At a time when the Centre and the state government are trying their best to provide relief to the flood-hit residents of the city, people living in other districts of the state allege they have been neglected.

"There are no fresh vegetables available in the market, the government rations depots are out of ration and now our cooking gas cylinders too are running empty," Parvez Ahmed, a resident of North Kashmir's Sopore town, told PTI (Press Trust of India) on phone. However, residents of the apple rich town were running out of ration and other essential commodities.

(Hindustan Times, The Indian Express, The Statesman & Times of India, 16th September 2014)

CASA's RESPONSE:

CASA started its relief operation from 13th September 2014 in the worst affected areas. The airlifted solar lanterns, milk packs, biscuits were distributed to the affected families in Banipora district. The following table provides the distribution details in the district.

S.No	Village Name	Relief items distributed per family	No. of families covered
1	Khaujabagh	1 Solar lantern	89
2	Shaltang	3 liters of milk	92
3	Mustafabad	Biscuit packets	7

4	Malora		29
Total	4 Villages		217

CHALLENGES:

- The lack of availability of petrol and diesel has to a large extent restricted the mobility of the field team.
- There is also scarcity of boats and boats are not available. Therefore distribution of relief items even by boats is not possible.
- The demand in the affected areas for relief support is very high but there has been low level of response to the ACT preliminary appeal for the situation.

The flood and landslide situation in Kashmir valley turned out be one of the greatest tragedies after the Tsunami that hit the Southern parts of the country in the year 2004. There is enormous need for extending relief support to the affected communities. Therefore, CASA requests all the Resource Sharing Partners to maximize their grants towards the ACT appeal within their financial constraints.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD:





